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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (10/16): Hamas continues to stall the national reconciliation process

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Main Stories:  
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The dailies prominently report on today's UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) session to discuss the Goldstone report. In response to remarks by Israeli Ambassador to the UN Gabriela Shalev stating that Israel will boycott any peace talks if the report is not withdrawn, Palestinian Authority (PA) Ambassador to the UN Ibrahim Khreishah noted that the PA is not concerned about a peace process that is based on continued settlement activity, the building of the separation wall, and adoption of collective punishment policies against the Palestinian people.

The local press continues to report on national reconciliation. Azzam Al-Ahmad submitted Fatah's approval of the Egyptian proposal yesterday to Egyptian Chief of Intelligence Omar Suleiman. The reports note that Hamas has requested two to three more days before submitting their response. The Palestinian factions based in Damascus said that they won't sign the agreement unless it recognizes the Palestinians' right of resistance, according to coverage.

PA President Mahmoud Abbas's remarks during a joint press conference with Spanish Prime Minister Jose Zapatero received prominent coverage in the local press. Abbas stated that the Palestinian elections will be held according to the basic law in January 2010 unless national reconciliation is successful, in which case the elections will be held in June 2010.

Citing the Israeli daily Yediot, the local press highlights news that after its failure to reach an agreement to freeze settlement activity and announce the resumption of negotiations, the US plans to move directly to final status negotiations. The report notes that

the US will invite the Palestinians and Israelis to the US to discuss the crucial issues, including Jerusalem, borders and security. In related coverage, the reports note that Special Envoy George Mitchell met with an Israeli delegation in Washington yesterday and discussed ways to re-launch negotiations.

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BLOCK QUOTES:  
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1) Al-Quds independent daily runs an editorial under the title "Who is deceiving the Palestinian people?" (10/16): "The Palestinian leadership and political factions are responsible for deceiving the Palestinian people. The Palestinians dream about national reconciliation, but no one knows who is responsible for the failure of the reconciliation thus far. Is it Hamas or Fatah? Whom should we believe? The factions fight and the people pay the price."

2) Samih Shbeib opines in Al-Ayyam independent daily under the title "Hamas and the closed prospects" (10/16): "Hamas will not approve of holding national presidential and legislative elections. In fact they see no need to hold the elections because they won't be elected again. In the coming days, we will see that Hamas is creating many obstacles and problems with Egypt to hinder the national reconciliation."

RUBINSTEIN